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EXAMINER

FISCHER, ANDREW J

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

3627

DATE MAILED: 01/30/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/738,471

Applicant(s)

BLACK ET AL.

Examiner

Andrew J. Fischer

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 20 October 2005.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 24-45 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 35 and 36 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 24-34 and 37-45 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>9/23/05</u> . | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Acknowledgements

1. Applicants' amendment filed October 20, 2005 is acknowledged. Accordingly, claims 24-45 remain pending.
2. Applicants' election of Group I (claims 24-33) in the reply filed on January 19, 2005 is acknowledged. Because Applicants did not distinctly and specifically point out the supposed errors in the restriction requirement in accordance with 37 C.F.R. §1.111(b), the election has been treated as an election without traverse. See MPEP §818.03(a).
3. Claims 35 and 36 are withdrawn from further consideration pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.142(b) as being drawn to a nonelected invention, there being no allowable generic or linking claim. Election was made without traverse in the reply filed on January 19, 2005.
4. This Office Action, the "Second Final Office Action" is given Paper No. 20060122..
5. All references in this Office Action to the capitalized versions of "Applicants" refers specifically the Applicants of record. References to lower case versions of "applicant" or "applicants" refers to any or all patent "applicants." Unless expressly noted otherwise, references to "Examiner" in this Office Action refers to the Examiner of record while reference to or use of the lower case version of "examiner" or "examiners" refers to examiner(s) generally.

Information Disclosure Statement

6. The information disclosure statement ("IDS") filed October 23, 2005 fails in part to comply with the provisions of 37 C.F.R. §1.97, 37 C.F.R. §1.98, and MPEP §609 because the

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date of publication is not found or the listing is not legible. However all information initialed by the Examiner has been considered. The IDS been placed in the application file, but crossed out information referred to therein has not been considered as to the merits. In the past, the Examiner has initial such documents and used them in a rejection only to have applicant argue the date of the reference is not known. The Examiner will not revisit that scenario. Applicants are advised that the date of any re-submission of any item of information contained in this information disclosure statement or the submission of any missing element(s) will be the date of submission for purposes of determining compliance with the requirements based on the time of filing the statement, including all certification requirements for statements under 37 C.F.R. §1.97(e). See MPEP §609 ¶ C(1).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC §112 2nd Paragraph

7. The following is a quotation of the 2nd paragraph of 35 U.S.C. §112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

8. Claims 25, 26, 29, 30, 33, 39, 42, and 44 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, 2nd paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. The claims are replete with errors. Some examples follow.

- a. In claim 44, it is unclear if “of the web” page modifies “at least one of content” and “meta data” or just meta data. Based upon the principles of English grammar, the Examiner adapts the position that the phrase “of the web page” is not directed to “at least one of content”.

- b. In claim 25, it is unclear the list of items recited is conjunctive or disjunctive.
- c. In claim 26, the phrase “statically associated” is indefinite.
- d. In claim 29, it is unclear if “the first keyword” as recited in line 1 is the same or different from “the at least one first keyword” as recited in claim 24. Applicants use “the at least one first keyword” else where in claim 24. Thus, phrases that do not use the phrase “at least one first keyword” are presumed to means something different from “at least one first keyword.” See *CAE Screenplates Inc. v. Heinrich Fielder GmbH & Co. KG*, 224 F.3d 1308, 1317, 55 USPQ2d 1804, 1810 (Fed. Cir. 2000) (“In the absence of any evidence to the contrary, we must presume that the use of these different terms in the claims connotes different meanings.”).¹
- e. In claim 30, the phrase “the analyzing products in the product database produces” is indefinite. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim (*i.e.* “the analyzing”). Thus it is unclear if Applicants intend it to mean some other “analyzing” or “the analyzing” as recited in claim 24.
- f. In claim 33, the phrase “the analyzing products in the product database produces” is indefinite. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim (*i.e.* “the analyzing”). Thus it is unclear if Applicants intend it to mean some other “analyzing” or “the analyzing” as recited in claim 32.

¹ See also *Fonar Corp. v. Johnson & Johnson*, 821 F.2d 627, 632, 3 USPQ2d 1109, 1113 (Fed. Cir. 1987) (noting that the meaning of claim terms must be defined in a manner that is consistent with its appearance in other claims in the same patent); *c.f. Bancorp Services LLC v. Hartford Life Insurance Co.*, 69 USPQ2d 1996, 2000-01 (Fed. Cir. 2004) (“That inference, however, is not conclusive; it is not unknown for different words to be used to express similar concepts, even though it may be poor drafting practice.”)

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- g. In claim 39, it is unclear what is “a similarity”
- h. In claim 42, it is unclear if the list of items following “group consisting of” is open list or a closed list and whether or not the series of items are conjunctive or disjunctive.
- i. Additionally, it is unclear if “files” as recited in claim 42 line 2 is the same or different from “at least one file” as recited in claim 24.
- j. In claim 44, it is unclear if “a web page” as recited in lines 3 and 9 are the same or different from “a web page” as recited in lines 1 and 3 respectively.
- k. Also in claim 44, it is unclear if “at least one product” as recited in line 7 is the same or different from “at least one product” as recited in line 1.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC §102

9. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. §102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office Action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(a) the invention was known or used by others in this country, or patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country, before the invention thereof by the applicant for a patent.

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States. . . .

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

10. Claims 24-34 and 37-45 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Angles et. al. (U.S. 5,933,811)(“Angles”), Gralla’s How the Internet Works (“Gralla”), and

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Muller's Desktop Encyclopedia of the Internet ("Muller").² Angles discloses the claimed analyzing a web page to obtain a first keyword (the user inputs 'widget' into a search engine); receiving (by the user) a second keyword ("price") the second keyword being produced by analyzing products (widgets) in a product database (the table containing a list of products and their prices); associating the first key word with the second key word (the widget is associated with its price); obtaining at least one file representing at least one product (downloading search results and saving them to a file).

11. Claims 24-34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being clearly anticipated by Merriman et. al. (U.S. 5,948,061)("Merriman"). Gralla, and Muller.

12. In both anticipation rejections above, the Examiner cites Gralla and Muller simply to show the inherent features of the Internet.

13. The Examiner notes that clicking on a link in a web page whereby the user's computer then retrieves a web page is the "receiving a request from a user to display a web page" as recited in e.g. claim 44.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC §103

14. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. §103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office Action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

² See MPEP §2131.01 III expressly authorizing multiple reference anticipation rejections to show inherent features.

15. Claims 24-34 and 37-45 are alternatively rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Angles in view of Gralla and Muller.³ It is the Examiner's principle position that the claims are anticipated because it is inherent that one can save the search results in a file.

However if not inherent, it would have been obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Angles to include downloading a file such as a user manual in PDF form. Such a modification would have allowed the user to view document about the product they inquired about before they make the purchase.

16. In this rejection, Gralla and Muller are cited simply to show the inherent features of the Internet.

17. Claim 34 is alternatively rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Angles or Merriman. Because Invention I is not patentably distinct from Invention II and because Invention II is not patentably distinct from Invention I, the patentability of Invention II stands or falls with the patentability of Invention I.

18. Because Applicants have not objectively indicated and redefined claim limitation(s) to have meanings other than their ordinary and accustomed meanings, the Examiner concludes that Applicants have decided not to be their own lexicographer. To support this position, the Examiner relies on the following factual findings. First and as noted in the previous Office Action,⁴ the Examiner has carefully reviewed the specification and prosecution history and can

³ See MPEP §2112 expressly authorizing alternative §102/§103 rejections when the question of inherency is present in the anticipation rejection.

⁴ See the Second Non Final Office Action mailed March 22, 2005, Paper No. 03142005 Paragraph No. 20.

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not locate any lexicographic definition(s). Second, the Examiner finds that not only have Applicants not pointed to definitional statements in their specification or prosecution history, Applicants have also not pointed to a term or terms in a claim with which to draw in those statements⁵ with the required clarity, deliberateness, and precision.⁶ Third, after receiving express notice in the previous Office Action of the Examiner's position that lexicography is not invoked,⁷ Applicants have not pointed out the "supposed errors" in the Examiner's position regarding lexicography invocation in accordance with 37 C.F.R. §1.111(b) (i.e. Applicants have not argued lexicography is invoked). Finally and to be sure of Applicants' intent, the Examiner also notes that Applicants have declined the Examiner's express invitation⁸ to be their own lexicographer.⁹ It remains the Examiner's position that these requirements were reasonable.¹⁰

⁵ "In order to overcome this heavy presumption in favor of the ordinary meaning of claim language, it is clear that a party wishing to use statements in the written description to confine or otherwise affect a patent's scope must, *at the very least*, point to a term or terms in the claim with which to draw in those statements. [Emphasis added.]" *Johnson Worldwide Assocs. v. Zebco Corp.*, 175 F.3d 985, 989, 50 USPQ2d 1607, 1610 (Fed. Cir. 1999).

⁶ "The patentee's lexicography must, of course, appear 'with reasonable clarity, deliberateness, and precision' before it can affect the claim." *Renishaw PLC v. Marposs Societa' per Azioni*, 158 F.3d 1243, 1249, 48 USPQ2d 1117, 1121 (Fed. Cir. 1998) citing *In re Paulsen*, 30 F.3d 1475, 1480, 31 USPQ2d 1671, 1674 (Fed. Cir. 1994).

⁷ See again the Second Non Final Office Action, Paragraph No. 20.

⁸ Id.

⁹ See e.g. *Fuji Photo Film Co. v. ITC*, 386 F.3d 1095, 72 USPQ2d 1769, 1773 (Fed. Cir. 2004) (noting that applicants' failure to correct the examiner's characterization of an element of claim interpretation is nevertheless an indication of how a claim should be interpreted since applicant declined the examiner's express invitation to correct a possible error in claim interpretation: "applicant's attention was called to the examiner's interpretation of [how the element was interpreted by the examiner, and] applicant was invited to correct the examiner's interpretation—an invitation the applicant did not accept.").

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Accordingly and for due process purposes, the Examiner gives notice that for the remainder of the examination process (and unless expressly noted otherwise by the Examiner), the heavy presumption in favor of the ordinary and accustomed meaning is not overcome; the claims therefore continue to be interpreted with their “broadest reasonable interpretation” In *re Morris*, 127 F.3d 1048, 1054, 44 USPQ2d 1023, 1027 (Fed. Cir. 1997).¹¹ The Examiner now relies heavily and extensively on this interpretation.¹² Unless expressly noted otherwise by the Examiner, the preceding claim interpretation principles in this paragraph apply to all examined claims currently pending.

19. Under the broadest reasonable interpretation standard noted above and unless expressly modified in this Office Action, the Examiner maintains his claim interpretations including the statements and/or definitions of claim limitations as noted in the Second Non Final Office Action. Those previous definitions are part of the administrative record and, in accordance with

¹⁰ The Examiner’s requirements on this matter were reasonable on at least two separate and independent grounds. First, the Examiner’s requirements were simply an express request for clarification of how Applicants intend their claims to be interpreted so that lexicography (or even an *attempt* at lexicography) by Applicants was not inadvertently overlooked by the Examiner. Second, the requirements were reasonable in view of the USPTO’s goals of compact prosecution, productivity with particular emphasis on reductions in both pendency and cycle time, and other goals as outlined in the USPTO’s The 21st Century Strategic Plan, February 3, 2003 available at www.uspto.gov/web/offices/com/strat21/index.htm (last accessed January 22, 2006).

¹¹ See also *In re Bass*, 314 F.3d 575, 577, 65 USPQ2d 1156, 1158 (Fed. Cir. 2002) (“In examining a patent claim, the PTO must apply the broadest reasonable meaning to the claim language, taking into account any definitions presented in the specification. Words in a claim are to be given their ordinary and accustomed meaning unless the inventor chose to be his own lexicographer in the specification”) (citations omitted); *In re Etter*, 756 F.2d 852, 858, 225 USPQ 1, 5 (Fed. Cir. 1985) (en banc); and MPEP §§ 2111 and 2111.01.

¹² See 37 C.F.R. § 1.104(c)(3) which states in part: “the examiner may rely upon admissions by applicant . . . as to *any matter* affecting patentability [Emphasis added.]”

In re Morris, are provided simply as a factual source to support the Examiner's claim interpretations (and ultimately the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences claim interpretations if necessary¹³) during ex parte examination.

20. In all claim phrases the recited the phrase "at least one" (e.g. see claim 25), the Examiner interprets such phrases as being disjunctive phrases.

21. It is the Examiner's positoin that Applicants do not claim any product-by-process claims.

Response to Arguments

22. Applicants' arguments filed October 20, 2005 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Unless expressly noted otherwise in this paragraph or elsewhere in this Office Action, the Examiner maintains his findings of fact and conclusions of law as noted in the previous office action(s). However all objection(s) and/or rejection(s) from any previous office action that are not maintained in this Office Action are either overcome by Applicants and/or are hereby withdrawn.

¹³ See *Gechter v. Davidson*, 116 F.3d 1454, 1460, 43 USPQ2d 1030, 1035 (Fed. Cir. 1997) ("[W]e hold that the Board is required to set forth in its opinions specific findings of fact and conclusions of law adequate to form a basis for our review.").

Regarding Indefiniteness Under 35 USC §112 2nd Paragraph¹⁴

23. First, the Examiner notes that the primary purpose of the definiteness requirement is to provide notice. “The primary purpose of the definiteness requirement is to ensure that the claims are written in such a way that they give notice to the public of the extent of the legal protection afforded by the patent, so that interested members of the public, e.g., competitors of the patent owner, can determine whether or not they infringe. That determination requires a construction of the claims according to the familiar canons of claim construction.” *All Dental Prodx, LLC v. Advantage Dental Products, Inc.*, 309 F.3d 774, 779-80, 64 USPQ2d 1945, 1949 (Fed. Cir. 2002) (citations omitted).

24. Second, it is the Examiner’s position that during ex parte examination, if a claim in a utility patent application is indefinite on its face, the claim is indefinite. “If the scope of the invention sought to be patented is unclear from the language of the claim, a second paragraph rejection will properly lie.” *In re Wiggins*, 488 F.2d 538, 179 USPQ 421, 423 (CCPA 1973) (citations and quotations omitted).

25. Third, if a claim is indefinite under 35 U.S.C. §112 2nd paragraph, it is impossible to completely and accurately construe claim of the claim. See *Honeywell International Inc. v. ITC*, 68 USPQ2d 1023, 1030 (Fed. Cir. 2003) (“Because the claims are indefinite, the claims, by definition, cannot be construed.”). However, in accordance with MPEP §2173.06 and the

¹⁴ Because this application has now been at least twice rejected and is therefore eligible for appeal to the USPTO’s Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences (“Board”), because of recent decisions by the Board and the Board’s position on indefiniteness, and in order to help and enable Applicants to craft reasoned arguments should Applicants eventually decide to appeal an indefiniteness rejection to the Board, the Examiner has provided the following discussion on 35 USC §112 2nd Paragraph and indefiniteness.

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USPTO's policy of trying to advance prosecution by providing art rejections even though these claim are indefinite, the claims are construed and the art is applied *as much as practically possible*.

26. Forth, the Examiner recognizes that breath of a claim is not be equated with indefiniteness. *In re Miller*, 441 F.2d 689, 169 USPQ 597 (CCPA 1971). However, "[i]f the language of the claim is such that a person of ordinary skill in the art could not interpret the metes and bounds of the claim so as to understand how to avoid infringement, a rejection of the claim under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph would be appropriate." MPEP §2173.02 citing *Morton Int'l, Inc. v. Cardinal Chem. Co.*, 5 F.3d 1464, 1470, 28 USPQ2d 1190, 1195 (Fed. Cir. 1993). In other words, claim breath indicates the range or scope a claim limitation covers while the metes and bounds indicate where the claimed subject matter begins and ends. These are two principles are distinct and separate principles. A broad claim—like a narrow claim—may or may not have clear metes and bounds and thus may or may not be definite. Thus, if a person of ordinary skill in the art could not interpret the metes and bounds of a claim—even a broad claim—so as to understand how to avoid infringement, the claim is indefinite.

27. Fifth, a claim in a utility patent application is either indefinite under 35 U.S.C. §112, 2nd paragraph or it is not. Contrary to recent decisions of the USPTO's Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences ("Board"), the law does not recognize a 'scale' or 'range' of indefiniteness such as 'slightly indefinite,' 'somewhat indefinite,' or 'not too indefinite.' There is no middle ground since at the end of the day, 'slightly indefinite,' 'somewhat indefinite,' or 'not too indefinite' are nevertheless still indefinite. The Examiner frequently receives arguments from applicants and decisions from the Board where the parties respectively argue that 'the examiner knows what is

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meant by the term' or 'the language is clear from the specification.' However these arguments can not overcome claim language that is indefinite on its face. In other words, "semantic indefiniteness of claims is not rendered unobjectionable merely because it *could* have been corrected. [Emphasis in original.]" *Allen Engineering Corp. v. Bartell Industries Inc.*, 299 F.3d 1336, 1349, 63 USPQ2d 1769, 1776 (Fed. Cir. 2002) (citations and quotations omitted).¹⁵

Again, so as to be especially clear, a claim is either indefinite—or it is not indefinite. When the claim is indefinite, the claim by definition, can not be construed. And if the indefiniteness is rendered during ex parte examination, neither the specification nor the prosecution history can be used to rectify the indefiniteness.¹⁶

28. Sixth, the Examiner recognizes that "compliance with Section 112 Para. 2 is a question of law." *In re Dossel*, 115 F.3d 942, 944, 42 USPQ2d 1881, 1883 (Fed. Cir. 1997). Additionally, when questions of indefiniteness arise, we use general principles of claim construction. "In the face of an allegation of indefiniteness, general principles of claim construction apply." *Datamize LLC v. Plumtree Software Inc.*, 417 F.3d 1342, 75 USPQ2d 1801, 1805 (Fed Cir. 2005) citing *Oakley, Inc. v. Sunglass Hut Int'l*, 316 F.3d 1331, 1340-41, 65 USPQ2d 1321, 1326 (Fed. Cir. 2003) (noting that a determination of definiteness "requires a construction of the claims

¹⁵ As a practical matter, a patent applicant almost always has an opportunity to correct indefiniteness by filing either an amendment to a non final office action, or alternatively if in response to a final office action, a request for continued examination under 37 C.F.R. §1.114 along with an amendment.

¹⁶ Compare *Exxon Research and Engineering Co. v. U.S.*, 265 F.3d 1371, 60 USPQ2d 1272 (Fed. Cir. 2001) vs. *In re Jolly*, 172 F.2d 566, 80 USPQ 504 (CCPA 1949). In *Exxon Research*, the Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit reviewed "similar claim language" as was interpreted in *Jolly* (where the language in question was held to be indefinite) and held that for purposes of indefiniteness, claims are interpreted differently during ex parte examination than the same claim phases during inter parte litigation.

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according to the familiar canons of claim construction”). However, a patent claim that is indefinite on its face can not be rendered ‘definite’ by a reviewing body simply because the result would otherwise be inequitable or unfair to applicant, because the result would otherwise be too harsh or severe since it might result in the patent application becoming abandoned, or because rendering the claim indefinite is against some noble policy. “Claim construction, however, is not a policy-driven inquiry. As stated earlier, it is a contextual interpretation of language. The scope of patent claims can neither be broadened nor narrowed based on abstract policy considerations regarding the effect of a particular claim meaning.” *SmithKline Beecham Corp. v. Apotex Corp.*, 365 F.3d 1306, 70 USPQ2d 1737, 1742-43 (Fed. Cir. 2004) (quoting *Quantum Corp. v. Rodime, PLC*, 65 F.3d 1577, 1584, 36 USPQ2d 1162, 1168 (Fed. Cir. 1995) (“[I]t is well settled that no matter how great the temptations of fairness or policy making, courts do not redraft claims”), *vacated on other grounds by* 403 F.3d 1328, 74 USPQ2d 1396 (Fed. Cir. 2005)(en banc).

29. Seventh, should Applicants appeal this application and should the Board have any questions regarding indefiniteness under 35 U.S.C. §112, 2nd paragraph and its application during ex parte examination when compared with inter parte litigation, the Examiner respectfully requests the Board to remand this application to the Examiner in order to provide additional guidance.

30. The Examiner concludes this section by reiterating that during ex parte examination, when a patent claim is rejected for indefiniteness because the claim is indefinite on its face, the claim can not be construed. In such a case, the application of prior art by an examiner or the

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Board is immaterial. Yet in order to avoid piecemeal examination, MPEP §2173.06 states that even if the examiner takes a position that a claim is indefinite, it is USPTO policy to nevertheless make an attempt at application of the prior art. However, neither this policy decision as set forth in MPEP §2173.06 nor even *any* policy decision by the USPTO can change the substantive standard for indefiniteness and thus the standard for a 35 U.S.C. §112 2nd paragraph rejection.¹⁷ So no matter how slight the indefiniteness may be, no matter how equitable applicant's arguments may seem, and no matter how great the temptations of fairness or policy making may appear to the Board, during ex parte examination, if a claim is indefinite on its face, the claim is just that—indefinite.

Conclusion

31. Applicants' amendment necessitated the new grounds of rejection presented in this Office Action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP §706.07(a). Applicants are reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period

¹⁷ See *Merck & Co. v. Kessler*, 80 F.3d 1543, 1559, 38 USPQ2d 1347, 1351 (Fed. Cir. 1996) (“As we [the Federal Circuit] have previously held, the broadest of the PTO’s rulemaking powers—35 U.S.C. Section 6(a)—authorizes the Commissioner to promulgate regulations directed only to ‘the conduct of proceedings in the [PTO]’; it does not grant the Commissioner the authority to issue substantive rules.”).

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will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

32. References considered pertinent to Applicants' disclosure are listed on form PTO-892.

All references listed on form PTO-892 are cited in their entirety.

33. Unless expressly noted otherwise by the Examiner or other USPTO official, the following four (4) citations to the Manual of Patent Examining Procedure ("MPEP") apply to this Office Action *and* any future office action(s), communication(s), or other correspondence provided by the USPTO: MPEP citations to Chapter 2300 are from the MPEP 8th Edition, Rev. 4, October 2005; citations to Chapters 200-900, 1200-1400, and 1700-1900, 2100, 2200, 2600 are from the MPEP 8th Edition, Rev. 3, August 2005. MPEP citations to Chapters 100, 1000, 1100, 1500, 2000, 2500, and 2700 are from the MPEP 8th Edition, Rev. 2, May 2004. MPEP citations to Chapters 1600, 2300, 2400 are from MPEP 8th Edition, August 2001.

34. Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

35. Applicants are reminded that patents are written by and for skilled artisans. See *Vivid Technologies, Inc. v. American Science and Engineering, Inc.*, 200 F.3d 795, 804, 53 USPQ2d

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1289, 1295 (Fed. Cir. 1999) (“patents are written by and for skilled artisans”). The Examiner therefore starts with the presumption that Applicants are skilled artisans who possess at least ordinary skill in the art. Consequently, it is the Examiner’s position that because the patent references of record are directed to those with ordinary skill in this art, these references are clear, explicit, and specific as to what they teach. Nevertheless some applicants apparently have difficulty understanding the references. In an effort to maintain compact prosecution, provide due process, and to help these applicants understand the contents of a reference when viewed from the position of one of ordinary skill in this art, Applicants are hereby given actual notice that if after reasonably reading any reference of record—whether the reference is currently of record or subsequently made of record—if Applicants can not reasonably understand or if Applicants have difficulty comprehending one or more sentence(s), statement(s), diagram(s), or principle(s) set forth in the one or more of the reference(s), Applicants should (in their next appropriately filed response) bring this issue to the attention of the Examiner. In addition to bringing this issue to the attention of the Examiner, and in accordance with 37 C.F.R. §1.111(b), Applicants’ response must also state *why* they either do not understand or have difficulty comprehending the one or more of the reference(s). If after properly receiving (*i.e.* Applicants’ response is made of record) both Applicants’ request for understanding and the reasons as to *why* the request is made—and assuming the reference is germane to at least one outstanding rejection—the Examiner may either provide a substitute reference, or alternatively, do his best to elucidate the particular sentence(s), statement(s), diagram(s), or principles(s) at issue in a reasonable manner. For all documents or references made of record after this Office Action, Applicants are given actual notice that this paragraph becomes effective when Applicants receive

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notice that the document or reference is made of record (*i.e.* this paragraph becomes applicable when Applicants submit an Information Disclosure Sheet or when Applicants receive an examiner's Notice of References Cited (Form PTO-892).

36. Additionally, Applicants are reminded that it is inappropriate for the USPTO to disregard any relevant evidence. "It is jurisprudentially inappropriate to disregard any relevant evidence on any issue in any case, patent cases included." *Stratoflex, Inc. v. Aeroquip Corp.*, 713 F.2d 1530, 218 USPQ 871, 879 (Fed. Cir. 1983). Second, when making substantive patentability determinations, it is clear error for the USPTO not to consider *all* evidence of record. See *e.g. In re Piasecki*, 745 F.2d 1468, 1471, 223 USPQ 785, 787 (Fed. Cir. 1984) ("All the evidence on the question of obviousness must be considered."); *In re Oetiker*, 977 F.2d 1443, 1445, 24 USPQ2d 1443, 1444 (Fed. Cir. 1992) ("After evidence or argument is submitted by the applicant in response, patentability is determined on *the totality of the record*, by a preponderance of evidence with due consideration to persuasiveness of argument. [Emphasis added.]"); *In re Glaug*, 283 F.3d 1335, 1338, 62 USPQ2d 1151, 1152-53 (Fed. Cir. 2002) ("Patentability vel non is then determined on the *entirety* of the record, by a preponderance of evidence and weight of argument. . . . ; patentability is determined by a preponderance of *all* the evidence. [Emphasis added.]"); and *In re Rinehart*, 531 F.2d 1048, 189 USPQ 143, 146 (CCPA 1976) (where the court expressly set forth the issue as "Whether, in light of *all the evidence*, the claimed method would have been obvious at the time the invention was made. [Emphasis added.]"). Third, any factual determination by the USPTO that does not consider *all* relevant evidence may not be supported

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by substantial evidence¹⁸ since the particular evidence *not* considered may be probative of a factual issue presented. Forth, it is well established that “[a] reference anticipates a claim if it discloses the claimed invention ‘such that a skilled artisan could take its teachings in combination with his own knowledge of the particular art and be in possession of the invention. [Emphasis in original.]’” *In re Graves*, 69 F.3d 1147, 1152, 36 USPQ2d 1697, 1701 (Fed. Cir. 1995) citing *In re LeGrice*, 301 F.2d 929, 936, 133 USPQ 365, 372 (CCPA 1962) and noting that regarding the claimed “simultaneously monitoring the selected multiple connection points,” the prior art “nevertheless anticipates [the claimed invention], even if it does not specifically disclose simultaneous monitoring of the output points, if simultaneous or parallel monitoring is within the knowledge of a skilled artisan.” *Graves*, 69 F.3d at 1152, 36 USPQ2d at 1701.¹⁹ Therefore because, inter alia, it is inappropriate for the USPTO to disregard any relevant evidence, because the USPTO must consider all evidence of record, because any evidence *not* considered by the USPTO may be probative of at least one factual issue presented, and because anticipation is determined by the teachings of a reference in combination with the knowledge of one of ordinary skill in the art, Applicants are hereby given actual notice that all prior art rejections (*i.e.* rejection(s) based upon 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 or 103)—if found in this Office Action or any subsequent office action—are based upon the cited reference(s) in the statement of the rejection in combination with the knowledge of one of ordinary skill in this art.

¹⁸ Substantial evidence is “such relevant evidence as a reasonable mind might accept as adequate to support a conclusion.” *Consolidated Edison Co. v. NLRB*, 305 U.S. 197, 229 (1938).

¹⁹ See also *In re Donohue*, 766 F.2d 531, 533, 226 USPQ 619, 621 (Fed. Cir. 1985) for the same statement of law and also citing *In re LeGrice*.

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37. Because this application is now final, Applicants are reminded of the USPTO's after final practice as discussed in MPEP §714.12 and §714.13 and that entry of amendments after final is *not* a matter of right. "The refusal of an examiner to enter an amendment after final rejection of claims is a matter of discretion." *In re Berger*, 279 F.3d 975, 984, 61 USPQ2d 1523, 1529 (Fed. Cir. 2002) (citations omitted). Furthermore, suggestions or examples of claim language provided by the Examiner are just that—suggestions or examples—and do not constitute a formal requirement mandated by the Examiner. Unless stated otherwise by an express indication that a claim is "allowed," exemplary claim language provided by the Examiner to overcome a particular rejection or to change claim interpretation has *not been addressed* with respect to other aspects of patentability (*e.g.* §101 patentable subject matter, §112 1st paragraph written description and enablement, §112 2nd paragraph indefiniteness, and §102 and §103 prior art). Therefore, any claim amendment submitted under 37 C.F.R. §1.116 that incorporates an Examiner suggestion or example or simply changes claim interpretation will nevertheless require further consideration and/or search and a patentability determination as noted above.

38. Also in accordance with *In re Lee*, 277 F.3d 1338, 1344-45, 61 USPQ2d 1430, 1434-35 (Fed. Cir. 2002), the Examiner finds that Nathan J. Muller's Desktop Encyclopedia of the Internet, ("Desktop Encyclopedia") is additional evidence of what is basic knowledge or common sense to one of ordinary skill in this art. Muller's Desktop Encyclopedia is a practical reference that clearly explains Internet services, applications, protocols, access methods, development tools, administration and management, standards, and regulations. Because of the reference's basic content (which is self-evident upon examination of the reference) and after further review of the entire record including the prior art now of record in conjunction with the

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factors as discussed in MPEP §2141.03 (where practical), the Examiner finds that the Desktop Encyclopedia is primarily directed towards those of low skill in this art. Because the reference is directed towards those of low skill in this art, the Examiner finds that one of ordinary skill in this art must—at the very least—be aware of and understand the knowledge and information contained within the Desktop Encyclopedia.

39. In accordance with the USPTO's goals of customer service, compact prosecution, and reduction of cycle time, the Examiner has made every effort to clarify his position regarding claim interpretation and any rejections or objections in this application. Furthermore, the Examiner has again provided Applicants with notice—for due process purposes—of his position regarding his factual determinations and legal conclusions. The Examiner notes and thanks Applicants for their "Remarks" on page 7. If Applicants disagree with any additional factual determination or legal conclusion made by the Examiner in this Office Action whether expressly stated or implied,²⁰ the Examiner respectfully reminds Applicants to properly traverse the Examiner's position(s) in accordance with 37 C.F.R. §1.111(b) in their next properly filed response. As noted previously, by addressing these issues now, matters where the Examiner and Applicants agree can be eliminated allowing the Examiner and Applicants to focus on areas of disagreement (if any) with the goal towards allowance in the shortest possible time. If Applicants have any questions regarding the Examiner's positions or have other questions regarding this communication or even previous communications, Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact Examiner Andrew J. Fischer whose telephone number is (571) 272-6779. If attempts to reach the Examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the Examiner's immediate

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supervisor, Alexander Kalinowski, can be reached at (571) 272-6771. The fax number for facsimile responses is now (571) 273-8300.

 1/22/06

Andrew J. Fischer
Primary Examiner
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AJF
January 22, 2006

²⁰ *E.g.*, if the Examiner rejected a claim under §103 with two references, although not directly stated, it is the Examiner's implied position that the references are analogous art.